

FINAL DRAFT

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND FINDING OF NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE

San Antonio Creek Restoration at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California

Pursuant to provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S. Code 4321 *et seq.*, implementing Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations, 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500-1508, and 32 CFR Part 989, *Environmental Impact Analysis Process*, the U.S. Air Force (Air Force) conducted an assessment of the potential environmental consequences associated with restoring 0.875 mile of San Antonio Creek on Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB or Base), California.

The Environmental Assessment (EA), incorporated by reference to this finding, considers all potential impacts of the Proposed Action and No-Action Alternative, both as a solitary action, and cumulatively in conjunction with other projects at VAFB. The EA analyzes the potential environmental consequences of activities associated with the proposed creek restoration, and provides guidelines to avoid adverse environmental effects.

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed project would remediate extensive damage to the banks and stream channel of San Antonio Creek, restore hydrologic function, enhance stream stability, minimize potential for further erosion, and begin to return channel morphology to a proper functioning condition. The restoration would entail constructing in-stream rock riffle grade controls at seven sites and bioengineering bank stabilization at three sites within San Antonio Creek, between U.S. Highway 1 and the Lee Road Utility Bridge. Constraints applicable to the Proposed Action are discussed under their relevant resource.

Only the No-Action Alternative is considered in addition to the Proposed Action. No other viable alternatives to the Proposed Action were identified. Implementation of the No-Action Alternative would result in the restoration and bank protection measures not being implemented within San Antonio Creek. Because the banks would remain unprotected, San Antonio Creek would continue to migrate toward San Antonio Road West, eventually undermining the roadway and forcing the closure of the road. In addition, the Lee Road Utility Bridge abutments could be undermined and fail during future major creek flows, threatening the bridge structure and utilities it supports.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The analyses of the affected environment and environmental consequences of implementing the Proposed Action presented in the EA concluded that with implementation of the environmental protection and monitoring measures described in Chapter 4, no adverse effects should result to Earth Resources (Section 4.4), Hazardous Materials and Waste Management (Section 4.5), Human Health and Safety (Section 4.6), Land Use and Aesthetics (Section 4.7),

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and Transportation (Section 4.8). In addition, the EA concluded that the Proposed Action would not affect Environmental Justice, Socioeconomics, and Solid Waste Management.

No cumulative adverse impacts should result from activities associated with the restoration of San Antonio Creek, when considered in conjunction with recent past and future projects on VAFB (Section 4.8).

While the Proposed Action is not located within the California Coastal Zone, given potential, temporary, downstream effects during implementation the Proposed Action, Vandenberg AFB will submit a Negative Determination to the California Coastal Commission and obtain concurrence prior to initiation of the project in accordance with the Coastal Zone Management Act.

Four areas of environmental consequences evaluated in the EA were determined to have the potential to result in less than significant impacts to the environment.

Air Quality

Fugitive dust emissions generated from equipment operating on exposed ground and combustive emissions from the equipment would cause adverse air quality impacts. However, no significant impacts are anticipated (see EA Sections 3.1 and 4.1). Emissions from the Proposed Action would not exceed significance thresholds; therefore, no adverse impacts to the region's air quality would occur. All measures described in the EA will be implemented to further decrease emissions during project activities.

Biological Resources

The proposed creek restoration has the potential to result in short-term temporary adverse effects to biological resources in the immediate area of disturbance, and long-term permanent beneficial effects from improved habitat and ecological function. Federal threatened and endangered species that occur or have the potential to occur within the project area include: unarmored threespine stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni*), California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), El Segundo blue butterfly (*Euphilotes battoides allyni*), and Gaviota tarplant (*Deinandra increscens* ssp. *villosa*). No significant adverse impacts to these species are anticipated with the implementation of the environmental protection and monitoring measures described in the EA.

Cultural Resources

Nine previously recorded archaeological sites and one isolated artifact are recorded within 0.25 mile of the proposed project area. Seven cultural resources are within or immediately adjacent to the creek restoration area. Project activities were developed to avoid adverse effects to known resources, where possible. However, one archaeological site could not be avoided. Because the site is deeply buried, VAFB assumes the site is eligible for the NRHP for the purposes of the proposed project only. Therefore, VAFB has determined that the Proposed Action would have an adverse effect to one historic property. This determination and the associated studies are documented within a Historic Property Survey Report, which was submitted to the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) for review and a request for concurrence. VAFB will seek measures to mitigate the project's adverse effects to acceptable levels with the SHPO and Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians. These measures will be contained within a Historic Property Treatment Plan, accompanied by a Memorandum of

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Agreement (MOA). Upon signature of the MOA by consulting parties, the terms outlined in the Historic Property Treatment Plan would be fully implemented.

Water Resources

The Proposed Action would require coverage under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit because the total disturbed area would be greater than one acre. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan would be developed and implemented to maintain compliance with the NPDES Construction General Permit. During site preparation and construction activities, storm water/erosion best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented during and after any clearing, excavation, and grading. Long-term BMPs would be put in place to address storm water erosion after project completion. Implementing these procedures and requirements should prevent adverse effects as a result of restoration activities. No significant impacts are anticipated to water resources with the implementation of the environmental protection and monitoring measures described in the EA.

PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVES

Because the Proposed Action would occur within the 100-year floodplain of San Antonio Creek, as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, no practicable alternative to the Proposed Action is possible.

FINDING OF NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE

Pursuant to Executive Order 11990 and 32 CFR 989.14(g), the authority delegated in SAFO 791.1 and taking the information contained in the attached EA into consideration, I find that there is no practicable alternative to implementing the Proposed Action in a floodplain. The Proposed Action, as designed, includes all practicable measures to minimize harm. Before undertaking this action, VAFB officials will complete all relevant regulatory processes, and subsequently abide by all permit conditions and mitigations.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based upon my review of the facts and analyses contained in the attached EA, conducted in accordance with the provisions of NEPA, the CEQ Regulations, and 32 CFR Part 989, I conclude that the Proposed Action should not have a significant environmental impact, either by itself or cumulatively with other projects at VAFB. Accordingly, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The signing of this Finding of No Significant Impact and Finding of No Practicable Alternative completes the environmental impact analysis process.

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**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT and
FINDING OF NO PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE
CONCURRENCE PAGE**

**In Conjunction with Final Environmental Assessment for the San Antonio Creek
Restoration at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California**

Environmental, Safety, and Occupational Health Council Approval:

STEPHEN M. TANOUS
Colonel, USAF
Chairman, Environmental, Safety,
and Occupational Health Council
Vandenberg AFB, CA

Date

MAJCOM Approval:

CHRIS PUCKETT, SES, DAF
Director of Installations and
Logistics

Date

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